



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

DISCUSSION

THE LATEST METHOD OF SEWAGE TREATMENT¹

BY EDWARD BARTOW

MR. W. F. WILCOX: There is a plant at Birmingham, Alabama, which is a modification of the old Columbus, Ohio, type. When the reservoir holding 2,500,000,000 gallons of water was built, it was found that the effluent from the Columbus type of sewage disposal plant was generally unsatisfactory. The county had very little money, and was not inclined to go into the Imhoff system. The company engineers undertook to assist the county engineers to develop a modification of this practically obsolete type of sewage disposal plant. A section 120 feet square was put in, with sixteen chambers. Each one of those chambers is the inverted frustrum of a pyramid. Sewage to the extent of 5,000,000 to 7,000,000 gallons per day was passed through those settling tanks. The sludge was carried over into the digesting tank, or the tank which fulfills the function of a digestion tank in the Imhoff system. When the tanks were filled to a height that they would not hold any more, sludge water was pumped on top of this so as to add to the liquid in the digesting chamber. It was then allowed to go into the sewer system. The liquid was pumped out of this digesting chamber back into a branch of the sewer. When the sludge has become digested it is then pumped into the sludge-drying beds. The liquid from these sludge-drying beds then flows by gravity back into the main settling tank, and seems to assist somewhat the bacteriological action, the building up of the bacteria for the disposal of the sludge.

The plant is rather crude, but it is a very inexpensive modification of a very obsolete type of sewage disposal plant. This plant is handling somewhere between five and seven million gallons of sewage per day; and the total cost of reconstructing the plant, including the filters and digesting tanks, was about \$75,000. What has been of particular interest is this, that when the Columbus tank was put

¹ Published in the June, 1916, *JOURNAL*, vol. 3, No. 2, at pp. 327-345.

in, a great many engineers rushed to the conclusion that they had discovered a remedy for all the ills of the disposal of sewage. The speaker has no criticism to make of the Imhoff tank; but he would be very much interested to see some of our foremost engineers diverge somewhat from the Imhoff system rather than to follow the beaten track.

The scientific determinations of that plant have not been as accurate as it was hoped they would be. The speaker urged for the past three years, and is still urging the county to go into more details as to the scientific examinations of results obtained from this modification of an obsolete type, which can be put up by many communities at a nominal cost.